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ABSTRACT

The major problem area of humanization and involvement in the New York City high schools is the focus of this report. In this area a most promising trend is the emergence of the school-within-a-school and the small-unit school. This report surveys the various units which have been established, their roles in the high school system, and some of the problems and issues they raise. The report does not provide an evaluation of the schools and programs. As a secondary point of interest, the extent to which the recommendations suggested in the publication entitled Toward the Twenty-First Century have been implemented and even surpassed are noted. In addition to the introductory section, two other sections address the small-unit programs in alternative education and small-unit organization within the high school mainstream. The former focuses on various aspects of adjunct minischools and independent alternative high schools. The latter focuses on the following areas: a complex of minischools, schools-within-a-school, educational options organized on a citywide basis, and the high school as a synthesis of small units. It is apparent from the report that t he one constant in the 98 schools is experimentation for constructive change. It is likely that no school or program is exactly the same in two consecutive years. (Author/AM)

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HUMANIZATION AND INVOLVEMENT: THE SMALL-UNIT APPROACH

Implementation of Recommendations Set Forth in

Toward the Twenty-First Century for the

New York City High Schools

A Report from the Office of ACCESS Programs

of the Division of High Schools of the

New York City Board of Education

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Humanization and Involvement: The Small-Unit Approach

I. Introduction

A. Perspective of This Report

Since the publication of Toward the Twenty-first Century in 1971, the New York City high schools have taken up the challenge of the six major problem areas described therein. Those areas are:

Humanization and Involvement
New Ways of Learning and Development
Making Opportunities Equal
The Community As School
Service and Responsibility
Mastering the Future

Experiment and innovation have characterized the high schools' programs. Effective innovations have been widely adopted. The High School Division is now issuing a series of progress reports which outline the major developments which have brought changes in specific areas. An earlier report dealt with The Community As School. This second one focuses on Humanization and Involvement. In that area a most promising trend has been the emergence of the school-within-a-school and the small-unit school. Therefore, this report will survey the various units which have been established, their roles in the high school system, and some of the problems and issues they raise. It must be emphasized that this is solely reportage, and in no way an evaluation of the schools and programs.

As a secondary point of interest to this study, the reader will be able to note the extent to which the recommendations of Toward the Twenty-first Century have been implemented and even surpassed in this brief, four-year timespan - - whether post or propter hoc.

B. Humanization and Involvement: The Small-Unit Approach

The Problem

The urban high school and its parent metropolitan school system face a fundamental problem: how to avoid the depersonalization which can so easily

characterize a large institution, while retaining the advantages of the facilities and the variety of learning experiences made possibly by its size. How to prevent the alienation which arises from a feeling of anonymity and impotence in an impersonal world? How to give each student a sense of identity and belonging, a sense of involvement and of personal power to affect his environment and the course of his life?

The problem is not unique to education. It besets every facet of our economic, political and social structure. The response of the schools to this problem may, however, be of critical importance in shaping the lifelong attitude of young people towards their society and its institutions.

Retrospect

New York City's high schools came early to an awareness of the problem. For decades, numerous solutions have been devised, with varying effectiveness. As long as fifty years ago, one high school was subdivided into five self-contained units in order to bring each student into a closer and more personal relationship with faculty and administration. As an idea whose time had not yet come, the format was eventually sacrificed to budgetary cost-cutting. It has recently been re-invented in a form attuned to today's climate.

The most widespread effort to give each student a personal identity in the school was the institution of the homeroom, or official section. There, in theory, the teacher was a house-parent to each student; while cognizant of individual needs and problems, (s)he acted as a guide to and liaison with the school's services. For a variety of reasons the homeroom deteriorated over the years into a formal mechanism for recordkeeping which, with some happy exceptions, has failed in its humanizing purpose. The potential of the homeroom for humanization is recognized in several recent proposals for omnibus counseling working through and with homeroom teacher-counselors. In the alternative schools, the original idea of the homeroom has been reincarnated as the "family-group" plan.

Other devices have proved effective and have been widely incorporated into the schools. Notable among these is the school-within-a-school, or sub-school, based on a common interest or career goal. A pioneer example is the cooperative education program which now operates in more than eighty high schools. In each, a coordinator screens, briefs, guides and monitors the individual students and, as well, fosters a group identity. Similarly, programs in practical nursing, in pre-tech education, in agriculture, and in a number of other fields have taken groups of students out of the mass and have given them a home base. The College Bound, College Discovery and Correlated Curriculum programs do the same. For many other youngsters, a corresponding identity is provided by membership in athletic teams, service organizations, clubs, student government, and musical or dramatic groups.

More recently, diversification and flexibility in the curriculum have given all students a broad latitude in their educational choices and, frequently, considerable input in curricular design. These moves, too, have strengthened the individual's sense of participation and status, especially if groups of students identify with a cluster of courses around a common theme.

It is evident that the "conventional" high school today is far from a Procrustean bed. A significant minority of youngsters has, nevertheless, remained alienated and disaffected, with absenteeism, non-achievement and dropout as their hallmarks. It is to the needs of this group that most of the small-unit innovations of the past few years have been addressed.

Lately, however, attention has focused on the need to provide a greater degree of humanization and involvement for the bulk of the high school population. To this end, an effective structural unit appears to be the small, goal-oriented school-within-a-school. A cluster of such sub-schools, together with one or more sub-schools for alternative education, may well be the emergent pattern for the large high schools.

Categories of Small-Unit Organizations

Although each small-unit school and sub-school is to some degree unique, the general outlines of their purposes and structure fall within a few broad categories. They may be classified as follows:

1. Small-unit Programs in Alternative Education
   a. Adjunct mini schools (attached to a regular high school)
   b. Independent alternative high schools
2. Small-unit Organization within the High School Mainstream
   a. A complex of mini schools
   b. Schools-within-a-school
   c. Units organized on a citywide basis

For each category, this report will attempt to highlight the patterns and processes which foster humanization and involvement, and to point out, as well, some of the problems and issues which are yet to be resolved. Individual schools will not be identified except for a few special-purpose units. For school-by-school descriptions the reader is referred to the annual Directory of the Public High Schools of New York City and the recently issued Directory of Programs in Alternative Education.

II. Small-unit Programs in Alternative Education

Alternatives to traditional classroom instruction abound in the city's high schools. Such programs are recognized as follows, in the New York City Board of Education's "Requirements for the High School Diploma":

> These requirements recognize that schools are developing credit programs and opportunities for alternative in-school and out-of-school experiences. Independent study and work-study programs, community internships, and apprenticeships are typical of these alternative programs.

Alternative programs are, however, only part of the concept of alternative education in our city.

As commonly understood, alternative education is tailored to those

young people who do not respond to the offerings and services of the regular high schools. Whether as a result of societal factors, personal difficulties or earlier educational frustrations, they view the school either as an alien and hostile environment or as a necessary but uninteresting requirement. Within this setting, many of them will turn away from even the most appealing alternative programs. They are the absentees, the scholastic failures, the dropouts, or, occasionally, the disrupters. For them, a new setting, which emphasizes interpersonal relations and involvement, has had to be devised. That setting is the small unit school or sub-school - - personal, informal, highly individualized.

During the past few years, two broad types of alternative schools have developed. One is the "mini school", a largely self-contained adjunct of a regular high school under the overall supervision of the high school's principal. The other is the alternative high school, an independent unit which reports directly to a superintendent in the High School Division. With some exceptions, the objective of both, and the population they serve, are similar. For both, the small size of the unit is of the essence.

Adjunct Mini Schools

Necessity gave birth to the mini school during the turbulence of the latter nineteen-sixties. Especially in several of the harried inner-city high schools, a relatively small number of disaffected students - - truants, "cutters", disrupters - - seriously obstructed the instructional program for the majority of students. To serve this group, and at the same time to protect the interests of the majority, one or two experimental "street academies" were set up, where a limited number of alienated youngsters could fashion an acceptable educational environment. Away from the high school premises, and given a loose rein by the parent school, the academy avoided any aura of the classroom Teachers were selected for their sympathy and rapport with the students. Close ties with the local community and with sponsoring civic and corporate agencies encouraged the integration of out-of-school learning experiences in the

curriculum. Students and staff collaborated in decision-making, in curriculum development and in governance of the academy. Standards of behavior and responsibility were set, in the main, by the students and were enforced by peer-group influence.

Fumbles there were, and failings. Impatience with the need for structure and for routines, floundering in the search for valid curriculum, lack of know-how, overindulgence in "rapping" as replacement for study - - these were inherent in the growth process. Nonetheless, a positive outcome emerged. The students at an academy identified with it, they attended more regularly, they took pride in their school and in themselves. More and more, they began to study and to learn. Significant numbers earned a high school diploma (or an Equivalency Diploma) and went on to post-secondary education or employment. The mini school had proved to be an educational innovation, not merely an expedient.

Currently, thirty high schools in all parts of the city maintain adjunct mini schools, and more are in the planning stage. Approximately two-thirds of them are housed in the building of their parent high schools, the rest in leased off-site premises or in high school annexes which also house overflow population of the parent schools. Originally the on-site mini school was a compromise. Recognizing that optimum functioning is in part dependent on a separate location, many high schools chose the half-loaf of an on-site mini school rather than wait until suitable premises were made available. Resultant advantages of being <u>in</u> but not <u>of</u> the mainstream have, in many cases, made those mini schools pleased with the compromise.

<u>Organization</u>

The structure of the mini schools is roughly the same whether on- or off-site. A teacher-coordinator, assigned by the principal, is responsible for administration: scheduling, records, attendance and behavior, liaison with the parent school, functioning of the staff, and the handling of the daily

problems and crises which arise. Less specific, but of paramount importance, is the coordinator's leadership role in setting the tone of the mini school. The coordinator usually teaches part of the day.

Pupil enrollment largely determines the size of the staff. Mini school registers range from sixty to one hundred twenty-five, with one hundred the norm. Two mini schools are much larger, double the usual numbers. Class registers are kept relatively small by a special allotment from the High School Division which averages three teaching positions for each mini school, over and above the parent school's regular allotment of personnel. Consequently, while few achieve the desired 1:15 teacher-pupil ratio, most are well under 1:20. Additionally, a Reading Laboratory and a reading specialist, funded through Title I, have been allotted to a number of mini schools.

No specific allotment is given for guidance and counseling. Here, the philosophy, sympathies and resources of the parent school and its principal come into play. A principal may assign a counselor, part-time or full-time, to the mini school. A teacher in the mini school may be partially relieved of teaching assignments to provide guidance services. The coordinator may absorb this function. Or, and least satisfactorily, students may be referred for service to the guidance staff of the parent school.

Secretarial assistance is similarly spotty. The off-site mini school is more likely to have at least a part-time secretary than is the on-site mini, but there is no consistent pattern.

Textbooks and instructional materials are supplied by the parent school. A supplement of $1000 from the High School Division gives each mini school leeway for special materials and for "extras" such as field trips.

Staffing

Ideally, teachers are selected on the basis of their ability and desire to work effectively in the flexible, informal, non-traditional setting of the mini school, and to establish rapport with the students. They may volunteer

for the assignment or may be recommended by their supervisors or by the coordinator. In practice, the needs of the mainstream school may limit the availability of certain teachers. For example, it may not be feasible to release a topnotch mathematics teacher from the regular program. Staffing policies reflect, too, the viewpoint of the principal and of the assistant principals who supervise instructional departments. In view of the manifold pressures in a large high school, it is a tribute to the principals and their administrators that, overwhelmingly, the mini school teachers are apparently right for the job and happy in it.

Experience shows that one compromise should be avoided if at all possible. Where teachers have had to be assigned part-time to the mini school and part-time to the mainstream, the arrangement has been less than satisfying to teachers and students alike. The students, in particular, are seeking a group identity. Part of this is the feeling that their teachers belong wholly to them and to their group.

Interestingly enough, the racial or ethnic composition of the staff appears to be of little importance to the success of the mini school. It has been found that students in the mini schools - - whether Black, Hispanic or "other" - - respond to the outstretched hand and spirit of a teacher regardless of differences in background. Perhaps it is, again, the small size of the unit which makes it possible for students and teachers to overcome stereotypes and to relate to one another as individual human beings. This is, indeed, one of the major plusses in smallness and it is reflected in the relationship of student to student, as well as to and among staff.

Coordination

Although each high school principal has jurisdiction over the local mini school, the High School Division of the Board of Education coordinates the thirty mini schools citywide. One person in the Division submits and handles the special budget, collates statistics and progress reports, assists individual

schools, at their request, with start-up and ongoing problems, and facilitates monthly meetings of the mini school coordinators. Particularly valuable is this channel for sharing innovations, experiences and problems.

Within this general framework, the individuality of each mini school is striking. It is evident that each has evolved its policies, its immediate objectives and its curriculum in response to local needs. Some of the major variations should be noted.

Selection and Admission of Students

In admissions policy and procedure there are several patterns. Some mini schools serve students, usually sixteen or older, who have been on the high school register for a year or more but who have made little or no progress because of absence, inattention or the like. These students may themselves request admission to the mini school, or they may be referred by counselors, deans or teachers. In any case, the student and his/her parent must consent to the placement. Commonly, a screening interview is held to determine if the applicant is likely to profit from the mini school's program. In many schools the screening committee includes students, whose judgment of their peers can be exceedingly perceptive.

In this pattern, the student remains in the mini school until graduation, and earns either a regular high school diploma from the parent school or a New York State High School Equivalency Diploma. This takes one to two years on the average but the opportunity to earn credits in various self-paced ways has often provided a much needed incentive to acceleration for a previously drifting older student. Preparation and guidance towards employment or post-secondary education are essential functions in these mini schools. A job-development component with credit for off-campus work experience proves very effective.

Other mini schools focus on pupils in the entering (ninth or tenth) grades. They may be referred as described above, or, in some cases, are selected on the basis of their records in their earlier schools. These mini schools usually

retain the student for a maximum of one or two years. It is expected that the student will then have developed the attitudes and academic skills to enable him/her to continue in the high school mainstream.

Still other mini schools seek to attract the disenchanted through special-interest curricula. One builds its curriculum around music, another on civil service preparation. These mini schools bear a strong resemblance to the goal-oriented schools-within-a-school, which are discussed in another section of this booklet.

Another set of differences among mini schools is in the scholastic requirements for admission. Most of the mini schools accept the entire spectrum of students, from slow to bright. A few take only those who are severely retarded in reading; on the other hand, one asks for an eighth grade reading level and one or two others require some evidence of academic potential. A number of mini schools will accept students who are seeking an educational alternative even though they have maintained themselves creditably in the mainstream. It is then a guidance function of both the regular school and the mini school to assess and recommend the course which can best serve the student.

Even the founding concept of the mini school, that it exists to serve the students of the parent school, admits to exceptions. Students from any high school on Staten Island may transfer to Port Richmond High School's mini school, the only one in that borough. Harambee Prep, in Manhattan, is supported by two high schools although it is officially attached to one. A mini school of Boys High School, in Brooklyn, accepts transfers of out-of-school youth from all over Brooklyn and Queens. Its policy rests on the belief that a youngster can more easily make a fresh start in a new environment than in an adjunct of the school where (s)he has experienced failure.

Applicants to the mini schools are considered in the light of their individual needs. No deliberate effort towards integration, either racial or ethnic, is evident. It is, then, interesting to note that each mini school's

population generally reflects the racial and ethnic ratios of the parent school's student body.

Curriculum

Each mini school's curriculum is shaped by a number of factors: the requirements for the high school diploma, the nature of the student body, students' interests and requests, the available staff, the physical facilities. One emphasis which is universal, or nearly so, is the upgrading of students' skills in reading and mathematics. Beyond this, each mini school sets up courses which, while falling within the broad subject areas prescribed by the diploma requirements, respond to the students' cry for departure from traditional studies. Thus, science may be represented by a course in animal care; social studies by Problems of the Black and Puerto Rican Community, or Famous Latin Americans; English by Film as Social Commentary, or TV writing and Production; art by a course in photography. Psychology is a general favorite, as is drama. Interdisciplinary courses in a number of schools combine, for the most part, social studies and English. One mini school has initiated a laboratory-centered course which interweaves psychology, biology and mathematics.

Independent study, community service and work experience programs are widely featured, especially for the more mature students. Teacher-constructed study kits and teacher-supervised projects permit individual students to work beyond the interests and abilities of the group. As examples, one student has made a study of Dostoievsky, another has gone ahead to calculus. One or two mini schools, catering to older students who want to make up for lost time and earn a diploma as rapidly as possible, have eliminated group instruction in favor of individual study and performance contracts.

Meeting the physical education requirement is a thorny problem. Few off-site mini schools have any suitable facilities. In the parent schools, gymnasiums are designed for large-group instruction which implies a degree of discipline for which many mini school students are unready. Scheduling is difficult

at best. The problem is handled, variously, by waiver of the requirement in exchange for a school day in various sites, by meeting in community centers for athletics and sports, or by postponing the requirement until the student returns to the mainstream.

Schedules

The small size of the self-contained mini school has made possible the introduction of modular and cyclical scheduling of courses. Both these patterns are especially appropriate for students who chafe under the routine of an unvarying daily program over a span of months. Courses limited to five, six, or at most ten weeks can avoid the danger of diminishing interest; on the other hand, an absorbing activity need not be parceled out in daily forty-minute capsules. Credit for a course is proportionate to its duration. Thus, in a six-week course the student usually earns one-third of a semester credit.

Similarly, the length of the instructional day varies from school to school. In those which recruit chiefly older students, long-time truants or "cutters," it is practical to recognize that the self-discipline of regular attendance in even the most intriguing and informal classes comes hard and cannot be tried too far. These mini schools require only the minimum four hours of attendance, but expect the students to engage in independent study, community service or paid employment in the other half day. The mini schools which concentrate on special interests or on remediation for younger students are usually in session for the full school day.

Paraprofessional Services

Paraprofessionals and volunteers strengthen the programs in several mini schools. The early street academies, and a few of the mini schools established subsequently, obtained the services of streetworkers through funding by interested agencies such as the Urban Coalition and the Urban League. Though most outside funding has dried up, the Board of Education has retained the streetworkers (under the title of school-neighborhood workers) in these few schools. These paraprofessionals' closeness to the students and to their daily lives makes them invaluable

as informal counselors, as resources for students in difficulty, and as liaison with the students and their families at home. In a number of mini schools, students from nearby colleges act as volunteer tutors, especially in reading and mathematics. The one-to-one contacts so formed are another positive force for humanization. With the unit system of allotment of services available to a principal, conversion of a teacher-unit into paraprofessional units is now possible and is increasingly utilized.

Student-Staff Relationships

Informality and a warm relationship between students and staff are hallmarks of the alternative programs. Here, too, degrees of difference are observable. In some mini schools, students and teachers regard the mutual use of first names as a prime symbol of a breach in the traditional wall between pupil and teacher and of their departure from the classroom atmosphere. Other mini schools achieve close interpersonal relations without relaxing the teacher-pupil roles. Prized symbols in certain of the schools include sharing of lunchroom and washroom facilities. In sum, however, the tone of a mini school seems to depend more on the personal qualities of the teachers and the coordinator than on any given policies. The physical setting does affect the atmosphere to some extent. Small, flexible divisions of an open space, or round-table seminar rooms, immediately point up the alternative nature of the learning enterprise. Mini schools which must use conventional classrooms have to overcome the schoolroom aura at the outset.

Student participation in planning activities and curriculum, in screening and orientation of new students and in setting and enforcing standards of conduct is accepted almost everywhere, but, again, in differing degrees. A large measure of individual freedom - - for instance, to walk out of class, to lounge in class, to smoke in designated areas - - characterizes some mini schools, but not others. More important than the practices themselves is the way they are arrived at. The greater the students' input in policy-making, the fuller appears to be the students' acceptance of regulations and the greater the peer

pressure to conform to them.

Procedures and Activities

A description of specific procedures and activities in some of the mini schools may serve to flesh out the foregoing skeleton. The following accounts are far from exhaustive, but are either typical or suggestive of possible new departures:

1. Cyclical and Modular Schedules

One on-site mini school divides the semester into three six-week cycles and the school day into nine half-hour periods (modules) from 9 AM to 1:30 PM. A class may meet for one, two or more consecutive modules on a given day, but need not meet five days a week. Students take a minimum of five subjects per cycle, but, may take more and may accelerate, as well, by independent study projects and/or by attending mainstream classes after 1:30.

Such scheduling is easier in an off-site school. On-site it is possible only where the mini school is self-contained and need not share rooms or bell schedule with the regular high school classes.

The schedule at this mini school illustrates the variety and flexibility which are possible. In English, for example, courses in The News, in Short Stories, and in Crime and Detective Stories meet twice weekly for two modules (one hour) each day. Word Games meets for one module, three days a week, Speed Reading for one module every day. The Film course meets once a week for four modules, as does TV Production. A course in Publications (writing for the mini school's magazine) meets once a week for an hour. The other subject areas (one teacher in each area) are patterned similarly. One half-hour a day is devoted to Mini-Meet (counterpart of a homeroom period), except that on Tuesdays the entire student body and the staff gather for a full-hour Forum instead. The flexibility of the schedule allows, as well, for independent study and for field trips.

Students select their courses and construct their own schedules under faculty guidance. They must be present in the mini school from 9 to 1:30

except for authorized trips or out-of-school activities.

Each six weeks the program is changed, though some courses may persist through more than one cycle. Allocation of credits to courses in cyclical or modular schedules is easily accomplished. The citywide requirement of sixty clock hours for a one-credit course (one semester) is the yardstick. Mini courses are granted credit in proportion, but content is also weighed in assigning credit.

2. Grades

A few of the mini schools have broken away from the conventional New York City system of numerical grades. Some substitute Pass/Fail. Others use anecdotal evaluations and enter only Pass credits on the student's record. The mini school whose schedule was described above has gone even further in adopting an ingenious alternative to the grading system.

In the commonly used numerical grading system, the student receives a mark representing his/her percentage of mastery of the subject. Below a cut-off percent (65 in New York City) the student fails and receives no credit; above it, the student receives full credit whether mastery is 70% or 100%. In this alternative system, no mark is given. Instead, the student receives a percent of credit in proportion to his/her mastery of the course. There is no cut-off. Any degree of effort and learning is reflected in some credit. Thus, the pass/fail dichotomy is abolished. The purpose for this is to provide only positive reinforcement for effort and accomplishment.

The mechanics of this system in a cyclical and modular schedule are less complex than one might fear. An evaluation sheet for each student lists the courses taken during each cycle in a semester. At the end of a cycle, each teacher enters the percent of credit the student has earned in that subject and the maximum credit carried by the subject in relation to a full-semester course (one credit, or 100 "points"). For example, a course which meets four hours weekly for six weeks carries 40 points (.4 credits). The student may earn 75% of it, 30 points; or as little as 25% of it, 10 points. A student who has achieved beyond

the required standards for a particular course may even receive more than the maximum credit, perhaps 50 points. At the end of the semester, the student's credits in each subject area are totaled and entered on his/her cumulative record. For example, a student who has taken three four-hour courses in English and who has, in addition, completed a two-hour, one-cycle, independent study project may receive up to 140 points, or 1.4 credits in English for the semester. A premium is placed on effort towards mastery. Opportunity is provided for acceleration and for compensation for past failures. The student is never a "failure" but soon learns that .1 credit earned for a spurt of effort and accomplishment, followed by renewed "goofing off" does not move one very rapidly toward the 38 credits which equal a diploma. The mini school feels this process in itself has an educational value.

3. Curriculum Development

A departure from the traditional curriculum is basic to the mini school concept. This implies frequent decision-making, especially in cycled schools, and a great deal of curriculum construction, research into materials and preparation of materials by teachers.

Many if not most mini schools strive to involve the student body in curriculum planning. At least one mini school maintains a student-faculty committee to decide on a central theme for the cycle and on subject-area courses which will be related to the theme. Some of the courses are interdisciplinary. A second mini school schedules a course in curriculum development.

Another mini school, also cycled, issues an extensive list of proposed courses well in advance of a cycle. Students enter their order of preference or suggest additions. Courses which attract sufficient registration and which fall within the expertise of the faculty are then scheduled for the next cycle. A student who wants a course which is not scheduled may arrange for independent study under a teacher's tutelage.

As an illustration, the proposed courses in mathematics were: Artistic Geometry, Modern Math, Math Games and Puzzles, Algebra, Trigonometry, Business

Math, Consumerism, Business Law, Chess Logic, Philosophical Logic, Advertising, High School Equivalency Preparation. Space was provided for additional requests. The courses eventually scheduled were: Artistic Geometry, Trigonometry, Business Arithmetic, Modern Math, High School Equivalency Math, Algebra (as independent study), and Critical Thinking (not on the original list).

Courses are repeated from time to time, but not regularly. Consequently, course construction is exceedingly time-consuming for teachers, as is preparation of appropriate study materials, which must be gathered from scattered sources. Preparation of guides and materials for students' independent study projects is an additional voluntarily-assumed task.

Collaboration with the instructional supervisors of the parent school is spotty. Teachers in the mini schools generally agree that the assistant principals are helpful and generous with advice and materials when asked, but for the most part do not take the initiative in construction or supervision of courses of study for the mini school. Apparently, the mini school teachers enjoy their freedom from traditional supervision and do not demur at the extra burdens it entails.

4. Student Involvement

A keystone in the original concept of the mini school was student participation in every aspect of its operation. Only so, it was argued, would disaffected youngsters develop a sense of belonging to and identity with the school. This thesis continues to underlie the policies of most mini schools. Several examples have already been cited. A few more may illustrate current practices.

In a number of mini schools, a student-staff committee is the internal governing body. One mini school goes farther by including students on a committee to interview faculty members of the parent school who apply to teach in the mini school. The committee's recommendations are, of course, submitted to the principal for final decision. The same mini school maintains a committee, which includes students, to evaluate the adjustment of new students after a trial period. Mini schools report that such student involvement pays off in heightened assumption of responsibility by the students. Peer pressure is exerted on mavericks. Group and

individual problems become the concern of the students, not of the faculty alone. An improvement in the care of mini school property is noted, and a great decrease in stealing of equipment or materials. It is their school.

Another program involves students in working as a group to produce a yearbook, a journal and a handbook for the mini school. Under faculty guidance the students see the entire project through, from funding and organizing it to reporting, photography, developing photographs, editing, typing the manuscript and binding the publication. Beyond the skills acquired along the way, the experience in teamwork and responsibility to the group relates directly to the mini school's objectives.

Athletics are a major avenue of student involvement. Basketball teams in many mini schools have been credited with improving attendance and in some cases with bringing dropouts back to school. Various community centers have opened their doors to teams which would not otherwise have the use of a gymnasium. Since coaches cannot be paid, teachers or streetworkers donate their services. Thus far, this program has actively involved the boys more than the girls. Mini school students are also eligible for the parent school's athletic teams. The scholastic requirements for eligibility are no barrier, since the mini schools spur students to academic achievement.

5. Involvement in the Community

External activites in the community are a significant part of the program in many mini schools. The following are typical. In one, students attend school four days a week and spend the fifth in service at local hospitals, schools or community agencies. The released day is staggered. A second mini school is affiliated with a hospital where students serve internships for course credit. In a third, some students act as volunteers in a school for the mentally retarded and in a hospital, while others work with groups of senior citizens on an oral history of immigrants. These students are required to keep a diary of their activities. In yet another mini school, fifteen students participate, one day a week, in a consumer advocate program of the Federal Trade Commission. On the basis of their experience, they have also prepared and presented skits to their fellow

students and to senior citizens' groups. The release of groups of students for these and similar external activities is simplified by the small size of the mini schools and their consequent freedom from the red tape of larger institutions.

Community agencies have extended valuable services to the mini schools. Students at two mini schools are given free physical examinations at nearby hospitals. In another, psychological services are made available. The use of gymnasium facilities at several community centers has been mentioned above.

One mini school for health careers is sponsored jointly by a high school and a nearby hospital. Sophomore and junior students attend classes at the home school, then report to the hospital in the afternoons for orientation sessions and exploratory learning experiences. During the senior year, students take all classes at the hospital site. Teachers from the high school give instruction in academic subjects, while hospital personnel teach career skills. Experiential learning, supervised by the hospital staff, is also a feature of the senior year.

A newly-organized project is a program in art/science correlation at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. A museum-based coordinator acts as guide to small groups of students from a number of participating mini schools and, as well, brings materials into the mini schools. Special funding has made the project possible.

6. Ties with Colleges

Several local colleges have formed ties with individual mini schools. One invites students from a nearby mini school to audit classes. At another, two graduate students give art lessons to a few interested students at a neighboring mini school. Another graduate student worked with a mini school group on the production of an anti-narcotics film. In several mini schools, college students act as tutors and as informal counselors. More important, the contacts and one-to-one relationships thus established are not only a humanizing element but serve as well to raise the educational aspirations of the mini school students.

7. Relations with the Parent High School

To most mini school students the experience in the parent school was primarily negative. Conversely, these students were thought of as a thorn in the flesh. Any

positive relationships must therefore be carefully built and delicately handled. Again, there are differences in degree; for example, the mini school composed of entering-grade youngsters can be more closely tied to the mainstream than can the mini school which receives students after two years of failure, truancy or frustration in high school. In on-site mini schools, students have both the opportunities and the disadvantages of more frequent contact with the mainstream than those in off-site mini schools. These differences are reflected in the mini school programs.

The approaches in the on-site mini school are varied. In one or two, students take three periods a day of basic skill subjects in the mini school and two classes - - health education, art, industrial arts, for example - - in the regular school. Another requires its students to take a number of mainstream courses to qualify for graduation. Several others give students the option of attending regular courses of their choice. For example, physics attracts some otherwise turned-off youngsters, and they are programmed for a mainstream physics class which fits into their mini school schedule since the latter is so flexible. Typing is often studied in this way.

In some schools, mini school students use the gymnasium and the school lunchroom, in others they do not. The school library is always made available. Although the general student activities are open to mini school students, few if any choose to participate.

At the off-site mini schools, students pride themselves on their quasi-independent status. Parent schools have forged a variety of links through granting the mini school representation in the student government, after-school use of the school gymnasium, publicity in the student newspaper, services by the college counselor and generous access to instructional materials. One Parents' Association includes a mini school parent on its executive board.

Efforts are made, too, to prevent the divorce of the mini school staff from the faculty at large. Most schools maintain contacts through departmental conferences and meetings with instructional supervisors. The coordinator reports regularly to the principal, and may be invited to meetings of the principal's

cabinet.

Both the students and the staff of the mini school identify strongly with it. They are, too, sensitive to its image in the parent school. In many high schools, open support and approval by the school leadership has upgraded the status of the mini school in the eyes of faculty and students. The self-image and adjustment of the mini school students have blossomed correspondingly.

Problems and Issues

Several problems and issues have been mentioned or implied in the course of the foregoing account. A summary of them may be useful.

1. Housing

The mini schools are unanimous on the desirability of off-site premises. Separation from the main school not only concretizes the fresh start the students are making but offers students greater latitude to create their own learning environment. Flexibility, innovation and individualization of activities are easier in the small, independent setting. Mini schools which have moved to off-site locations report a marked difference in tone, morale and scope. The problems in providing off-site housing are the finding of suitable premises, the time and outlay needed to acquire and renovate them, and the added ongoing costs of rental and maintenance. Currently, the city fathers look with disfavor on any rentals as long as seats are available in mainstream schools. In 1969-73, this was less true and the movement gained impetus from such willingness to rent and renovate.

On-site mini schools function best when their quarters are self-contained, when they need not use conventional classrooms or bell schedules. Few high schools have plants which can be so adapted, or space which can be wholly released to this small group. The newest comprehensive high schools all have flexible class areas, each of which is large enough for such a mini school. (Five classrooms surround a resource area.)

2. Standards for Admission

Each high school must make some hard decisions when organizing a mini school.

Will it cater to the most seriously retarded students, or to those with apparent academic potential, or to the whole spectrum? To new entrants who can later be returned to the mainstream, or to the older teenagers who are verging on dropout? To truants and failures exclusively, or, as well, to students who have conformed and achieved but who seek a change? To a group with a unifying interest or career goal, or to the as-yet goal-less and uninterested?

A major issue is admission of the student with a history of disruptive behavior. A large segment of opinion would exclude such students as dooming the mini school's program. Other mini schools will accept those who appear to be seriously in search of a new educational environment.

The resolution of these issues depends, of course, on local circumstances and priorities. One answer for some schools may be the creation of more than one mini school, each to serve a different kind of need. At least one high school has done this.

3. Staffing

In differing degrees all mini schools face the problems of teacher selection, pupil-teacher ratio, guidance services, secretarial assistance and paraprofessional personnel. The desirable pupil-teacher ratio of fifteen to one is attainable only by some sacrifice on the part of the parent school plus the special allotment from the High School Division. The place of the mini school in the school's order of priorities will determine its staffing, as to the numbers, nature and quality of the teaching staff it attracts.

4. Supervision

Freedom to depart from conventional curriculum and instructional methods is at the core of the mini school concept. Supervision, with its connotation of authority and hierarchy, would appear to be its antithesis. A need exists, nonetheless, for some assessment of the validity of the mini school's courses and for professional guidance of its staff. Without skilled direction, an inexperienced teacher may spend untold hours re-inventing the wheel in the areas of curriculum construction and instructional devices.

Some supervisors do take the initiative in working with the mini schools, though most keep hands off except upon request. Some mini school teachers consult their department chairmen frequently, others rarely. Usually, mini schools submit any proposed new course of study to the appropriate assistant principal or to the principal for approval. Otherwise, supervision is welcomed only when the mini school faculty feels no threat to its freedom and creativity.

The sub-school concept may well flounder on precisely this tendency to deprive young teachers in the small units of the wide variety of know-how a good subject-area supervisor possesses. The initiative for creative, flexible supervision rests with the supervisors. As they share their accumulated expertise in their subject, its materials and how to convey it, their help should prove so valuable that mini school teachers will welcome it.

5. Guidance Services

The absence of any specific provision for guidance services has been noted above. The need for these services is very evident in the area of occupational and educational planning. Such planning is reportedly a feature in most mini schools, yet the expertise of professional counselors is rarely available in the mini school itself. For the most part, teachers make valiant efforts to provide this guidance, as well as personal counseling, but the extent of their information and competence is questionable. In the absence of a special guidance allotment for the mini schools, it is the concern of each parent school to meet this need for professional counseling.

6. Relations with the Parent School

Frequently, a corollary of strong identification with a small group is alienation from the larger body. In the case of the mini school, this separation tends to affect not only the students but the faculty as well. Conversely, the larger faculty, having no direct contact with the mini school (except, perhaps, earlier unhappy experiences with its students) may be inclined to regard the mini school's program and activities as a boondoggle.

In shaping attitudes towards the mini school, the principal's leadership

is paramount. Next in importance is the effectiveness of the coordinator in building bridges to the parent school and in influencing the mini school to cross the bridges. Some specific measures have been detailed earlier in this report.

7. Evaluation

Statistical evaluation of the effectiveness of the mini schools raises the question of a valid yardstick. Attendance, rate of dropout, progress in reading, numbers of graduates, college acceptances are normal criteria. The figures are meaningful, however, only in the light of the students' school histories and extrapolations from those records. Realistically, there is no minus side to the ledger; every achievement is a reversal of a previous pattern of failure. Attendance, among students who were constant truants, is all positive, even when less than the school average. Costs of operation must be weighed against the costs to society of potentially embittered drifters. Further, the less measurable changes in attitudes and in interpersonal relations may be of even more far-reaching significance than academic success. In sum, evaluation of mini schools, essential as it is, is a complex process which requires more than quantitative research and interpretation.

8. Security

Security against intruders is a special concern of the off-site mini schools. Currently, the parent school must either allocate a security position, which usually is hard to afford, for this purpose, or must leave the mini school without adequate protection. Where a parent school cannot stretch its budget sufficiently, it may be possible for a mini school to enlist volunteer assistance from parents and individuals in the community.

9. Budget

With the exception of a few special grants, as noted above, the mini school's allotment of personnel and materials comes from the budget of its parent school. The parent school, chronically struggling to cover all its requirements, finds it burdensome to provide the mini school with guidance, secretarial and paraprofessional services in addition to the normal complement of teachers. Many mini schools urge that their entire budget be earmarked by the High School Division, so that they will not be dependent on the resources and good graces of their parent schools.

On another front, the establishment of new mini schools is limited by the High School Division's budget for the special grants now made to mini schools. In a period of fiscal stringency, funds for expansion are the first to go. A high school must then choose whether to delay organizing a mini school until a grant is available or to open a mini school which must be supported wholly by the school's budget. An additional consideration may have some bearing on the question of how to fund the mini schools. A high school's decision to commit budget lines to a mini school draws the mini school directly into the school's priority structure and consequently heightens recognition and awareness of the mini school on the part of faculty and administration.

10. Mini Schools or Independent Alternative High Schools?

The Board of Education recognizes both the mini schools and the independent alternative high schools as legitimate avenues of alternative education. One body of opinion argues, however, that the mini school is the preferable unit. As part of a regular high school, it is claimed, the mini school has the advantage of the extensive equipment and facilities of the parent school and is under the supervision of a qualified principal and a team of assistant principals. Replication of plant, equipment and services for small-unit schools is very costly; yet without them students are shortchanged.

This issue will be discussed again in conjunction with the section on independent alternative high schools.

B. Independent Alternative High Schools

Eleven small alternative high schools operate as units independent of large conventional high schools, within the High School Division of the Board of Education. An immediate question is, what is their function as distinct from both the regular high schools and the mini schools?

The rationale of the alternative high schools is that each serves at least one of these four purposes:

1. It responds to the expressed needs and desires of a distinct community.

2. It offers a special service which is needed by a limited number of students over a broad area of the city.

3. It seeks out a student body which has not been reached otherwise.

4. It serves as an experimental pilot for a new educational approach.

To some degree, these purposes reflect the diverse origins of the schools. Four began as non-public schools organized by community groups who believed that they could thus reach the young people in the community who had been "turned off" or neglected by the public school establishment. Funds came from sponsoring corporations, foundations and private agencies. These schools have since, at their request, become part of the public school system but have retained their community orientation and affiliations. A fifth has equally strong involvement with its surrounding community though it was opened by the Board of Education as a pilot for a projected full-sized high school.

As needs for new services have surfaced - - for example, for an afternoon-to-evening session - - the Board of Education has itself initiated alternative schools. It has done so, as well, to set up experiments in alternative educational environments such as City-As-School. One project, the Satellite Academies, is the offspring of collaboration with the city's Human Resources Administration and the City Planning Commission. The newest,Middle College High School, is a joint undertaking of the Board of Education and the City University.

No two alternative high schools are identical in both the emphases of their programs and their target populations. The following chart may give some inkling of their diversity as well as of the functions they serve:

School	Emphasis of Program	Source of Student Body
City-As-School (Brooklyn)	External learning experiences and formal study in cultural, civic and governmental agencies as the primary avenue of secondary education	Students, citywide, who have completed two years of high school
Harlem High School (Manhattan)	Close affiliation with the Harlem community	All students eligible for high school, with concentration on those from the local area

School	Emphasis of Program	Source of Student Body
Harlem Prep (Manhattan)	Preparation for college	High school students, chiefly from Harlem, with potential and desire for higher education
High School Redirection (Brooklyn)	Business education, work-study program	Students, citywide, aged 15-21, who seek an educational alternative or who are potential or returned dropouts
Lower East Side High School (Manhattan)	Opportunities for acceleration; special provisions for Chinese-speaking students	Students, citywide, aged 14-21, with concentration on the Lower East Side community and on out-of-school youth
Middle College High School (Queens)	Career education, articulation with LaGuardia Community College (location on college campus)	Entrants into tenth grade from junior high schools in two districts in Queens
PM High School (Brooklyn)	Afternoon-into-evening schedule	Students, citywide, who have completed at least one year of high school
Pacific High School (Brooklyn)	Preparation for job entry or for higher education	Brooklyn students, aged 16-20, who were registered in a high school for at least two years
Park East High School (Manhattan)	Occupational orientation and related internships; close ties with the community	Teenagers and adults residing on the upper East Side of Manhattan, mainly from East Harlem
Satellite Academies (Four locations in Manhattan, Bronx, Queens)	Career education in office skills, health services; work-study and other career-related experiences	Students, citywide, preferably entrants into ninth or tenth grade
West Side High School (Manhattan)	Independent study, supplementary off-site learning experiences	Students of high school age who reside on the mid-to-upper West Side of Manhattan

Salient Features

Their differences notwithstanding, the alternative high schools share certain salient features. Since many of these also characterize the mini schools they may be reviewed here without elaboration.

- - The schools are small, ranging in register between 150 and 500.*

- - Most of their plants have been improvised and are furnished minimally. Instruction in science, shop or office skills, for example, is frequently curtailed by inadequacy of equipment.

*The four Satellite Academies have a combined register of 650.

- - The student body is recruited on a voluntary basis but consists largely of young people who were restive within the conventionally structured schools. Usually, applicants are interviewed to determine their suitability for the program.

- - Instruction is highly individualized, informal, sometimes unconventional. Independent study is encouraged.

- - Informality, warmth and closeness characterize interpersonal relations among the students, between students and staff and among the staff.

- - Students are actively involved in policy-making, in curricular planning, in recruitment and admissions, and often in school administration.

- - Most of the curricula emphasize acquisition of skills in reading and mathematics, and the basic high school subjects, with innovations in course offerings. Throughout, the focus is on affective education, building positive learning experiences.

- - There is a good deal of experimentation with modular and cycled schedules, with alternatives to the numerical grading system and with accreditation of external learning experiences.

- - Off-site experiential learning in the form of internships, work experience or community service is a component of most programs.

- - Most students prepare to earn the New York City High School Diploma. Others prepare to qualify for the New York State High School Equivalency Diploma.

Clearly, the processes and many of the programs in the alternative schools parallel those in the mini schools. In the opinion of many students in the alternative schools, however, independence from the regular high schools is essential. Some maintain that only with the change of scene could they make a fresh start. They point out, too, that separation from their old cronies was a necessary step in helping them change their attitudes and habits. They assert with feeling that for the first time they are being treated as capable young adults and are not regarded as "dumb." Whether or not these psychological needs can also be met by mini schools, on-site or off-site, remains a valid question.

The areas in which the alternative schools do differ from both regular high schools and mini schools are worth looking at. Some may suggest viable directions for the regular high schools; others raise serious problems for and about the alternative schools.

Plant and Facilities

Housing of the alternative schools varies greatly. Some occupy all or part of

former public or private schools. Others are in leased or newly acquired premises: for example, part of an office building, a converted bank, a former townhouse. Facilities depend to some extent on the nature of the original premises. A few include an area that may be suitable for a gymnasium; most do not. Some may have a lunchroom; in others a classroom is set aside for this purpose. The former school buildings provide conventional classrooms; other renovated sites feature flexible open spaces or seminar rooms. In all the schools, the need for improvisation in the use of space seems to heighten the spirit of involvement on the part of both students and staff. In devising ways of "making do" they make the school more wholly theirs.

Basic equipment boils down to seats, tables or desks, chalk boards, textbooks. Specialized equipment is limited. Not all schools have a science laboratory, an industrial arts shop, a typewriting classroom. Few own a library. These needs can be met in various ways, either through the initiative of individual alternative high schools or by the efforts of the High School Division. The facilities of a nearby regular high school may be made available at specified times. Students may attend classes in industrial and office skills at a neighboring high school or at one of the Board of Education's After School Study Centers. Equipment in one alternative school may be shared with others. It is even conceivable that a resource center which is centrally located may be set up to serve many of the alternative high schools.

Safety is a universal concern. Security guards or paraprofessionals - depending on the school's allotment of personnel - man the entrances. Fire drills are regularly scheduled. In general, the small isolated unit lacks the emergency resources of a large high school - nurse, emergency room, custodial force, manpower. Thus far, however, nothing has occurred to show that the alternative schools' safeguards have been insufficient.

Organization

The eleven alternative high schools came into being one by one, each in response to a separate situation or need. Consequently, no overall plan of organization was

imposed. On the one hand, this gave them the freedom to work out their own functional organizations, without a priori straitjackets; on the other, it has resulted in inequalities and inconsistencies which are now in the process of being resolved.

At present, the head of an alternative school holds no official title other than "head of school" or "teacher in charge." In the following discussion, the informal title of "director" will be used.

The lack of a specific title may be bound up with the variations in the status and the method of selection of these directors. In some cases the director was chosen by the community groups which founded the school. Others were selected by the Chancellor, or by the community and the Chancellor in concert. Qualifications for the post have been specified on a one-by-one basis. Salaries, too, are not uniform; they run the gamut from principals' level to teachers', with the majority on the assistant principals' scale.

The responsibilities of the director, within the small unit, cover the wide range of school administration and supervision. There is an absence, in the alternative school, of a corps of assistant principals to supervise curriculum, instruction and teacher training in each subject area. The alternative school's director is its only internal supervisor. On another front, the skeletal provisions for pupil personnel services necessitate the director's direct involvement in the day-to-day problems of attendance, health, discipline, guidance and admissions. In several of the alternative schools, the director must give a high priority to community relations and to the development of part-time jobs and out-of-school learning experiences for students.

Each alternative high school reports to one of the five high school superintendents, who has "line" responsibility for its functioning. The directors of alternative high schools receive all communications which are sent out to the regular high schools. The budget for both staff and instructional materials is allotted by the High School Division.

As the number of alternative schools increases and as their position in the school

system becomes regularized, the need to share common and unique experiences and problems becomes apparent. A consortium of alternative school directors was formed and for some time met regularly with the Executive Director of the High School Division. In the Fall of 1974, the High School Division created a coordinating and supportive service for experimental and innovative programs in the high schools. This office, whose acronym is ACCESS* is an important channel for communication with and among the alternative schools. It opens the prospect of more sustained and effective cooperation among them in handling their problems and in obtaining funding to implement their programs. It should be noted that the Office of ACCESS Programs has assumed responsibility for coordination of the adjunct mini schools as well.

Student Body

No single profile of an alternative school student can be drawn. The objectives and programs of each school determine the nature of the students it seeks to recruit. Some are oriented to former dropouts. Some accept only those students who have completed a substantial part of the high school course, while others are geared to the entry-level (9th or 10th year) student. Some look for young people who have demonstrated a potential for higher education, while others concentrate on those who need remediation in basic skills. Several welcome a cross-section of ability.

What all the students do have in common is a hunger for individual attention, for warm interpersonal relations and for status as self-directing young adults. It may be argued that since these needs are universal they cannot in themselves identify the potential alternative school client. What distinguishes these adolescents from those who find the large high school congenial, or at least, acceptable? At present, only hypotheses can be offered. Most of these students are from economically and socially disadvantaged backgrounds. Many are older than their high school peers, whether in years or in life experience. Some are individualists, disinclined to run with the herd. What part these factors play is an open question. An in-depth study of the alternative school population might yield inferences of significance for both the alternative schools and the regular high schools.

*Alternative, College Cooperative, Experimental and Special School Programs.

That the alternative schools have an appeal for minority-group students is borne out by statistics. In six schools, 90% or more of the students are Black or Hispanic. In a seventh, the population is approximately half Black or Hispanic, and 40% Oriental. Only in two schools do "others" predominate. It appears, not surprisingly, that it is the minority-group student who most keenly feels the need for a personalized environment and an affective educational experience.

Student Selection and Admission

Each alternative school sets its own policy for recruitment and admissions, subject to the approval of its superintendent. Prospective applicants learn of these options in a variety of ways. Word of mouth brings in friends of the alternative school students. Some schools send informational material to the regular high schools. Some send representatives, often students, to speak at meetings of parents and students. The Board of Education distributes a Directory of Alternative Programs to principals and counselors in the high schools and their feeder schools, as well as to other interested parties. Applicants to the alternative schools are usually interviewed, either by the director or by a student-faculty committee, to gauge their suitability for the program. Most alternative schools have waiting lists of applicants.

Some critics caution against a possible tendency on the part of the alternative schools toward "upgrading" their admissions. These critics argue that the alternative schools are not intended to serve students who can profit from the broad variety of offerings in the regular high schools, that indeed such students would be short-changed if deprived of the wider opportunities and facilities of the larger schools. The contrary argument holds that the conforming youngster who merely endures the anonymity of a large institution should not be denied the escape hatch of the alternative schools. In any case, it is claimed, most students and their parents would still opt for the regular high school. Still another option for the student who is poised between the regular and the alternative high schools will be discussed in the section of this report which deals with the trend towards schools-within-a-school.

Staff

The High School Division's allotment to the alternative schools is one unit for

each sixteen students.* The allotment to the regular high schools, including an overhead for "support", averages about eighteen students per unit. The 1:16 ratio for the alternative schools would thus appear to be fairly favorable. The alternative schools feel, nevertheless, that this gives them insufficient leeway, not only for small classes where needed, but for supervision of independent study and external learning experiences.

Typically, the staff of an alternative school consists of a group of teachers, a secretary, a security guard and, often, one or more paraprofessionals (school-neighborhood workers, family assistants). The teachers hold New York City licenses. In several cases, funding from community sources or industry adds specialist teachers and/or a guidance counselor to the staff provided by the Board of Education.

The school's director is responsible for staff selection. All the teachers are there at their own request, either as transfers from regular high schools or as new recruits to teaching. The teachers, like the students are apparently motivated by the desire for a more intimate and freer environment than they found in the larger schools. Although many must teach a greater assortment of subjects than before, and though they often lack physical conveniences, their enthusiasm is high, as is their sense of mission and accomplishment. Another bonus deriving from the smallness of the unit is that director, teachers and paraprofessionals see themselves as a team, with little regard for hierarchy. This feeling carries over into their relations with students.

Formal guidance functions are diffused among the faculty, and are usually performed by the director and by teachers and school-neighborhood workers on a part-time basis. Essentially, every teacher and every paraprofessional is a counselor to whom the students have easy and immediate access. It is of value, however, for both students and teachers to have the resource services of a professional counselor in the areas of college and career guidance as occurs in three of the alternative schools. This service may possibly be supplied as the coordination of the alternative schools progresses.

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*New York City high schools, since 1974, have received staff and supplies monies in the form of units. One unit equals the mean salary of a high school teacher. Differentiated staffing is permitted, with the principal using a conversion table. For example, a school secretary = .7 units; an assistant principal = 1.4 units.

Curriculum

Courses of study at most alternative schools parallel those of the adjunct mini schools. Skills remediation and basic high school subjects are the backbone of the curriculum, with other specialties offered according to each school's specific focus, its facilities and the available staff.

An exceptional situation prevails at City-As-School, New York City's "school without walls," whose courses are as varied as are the hundreds of community agencies, cultural facilities, business firms and colleges which offer themselves as learning sites. Aside from a very few in-house classes, the C-A-S headquarters serves only as a resource, planning, coordinating, guidance and monitoring center, and as a home base for the students.

Again, as in the mini schools, courses of study in the alternative schools, while subsumed under traditional curriculum areas, are far from traditional in content and emphasis. Social studies revolve about themes, such as Urban Problems and the Black Experience, which are of immediate concern to the students. English, science and mathematics are similarly focused. In several schools, though not in all, students have considerable input into curriculum decision-making.

Valid and, indeed, essential as is this affective approach, it raises the question of evaluation of curriculum. This problem leads to the next area of this discussion, that of supervision.

Supervision

It has been mentioned that the alternative high schools lack the well-developed supervisory structure of the regular high schools. In a large high school, though supervision is in the overall charge of the principal, the direct responsibility for teacher-training, improvement of instruction and curriculum development is assigned to an assistant principal in each subject area. This supervisor is both a specialist in the subject content and an expert in teaching methods.

In contrast, the director of an alternative high school is not necessarily formally qualified to supervise instruction. Certainly, (s)he cannot be a scholar in all curricular areas, and consequently cannot thoroughly evaluate either the content or the presentation of the courses offered.

Some directors and teachers, but not all, enlist assistance from the instructional bureaus at the Board of Education.* Some obtain and adapt courses of study which have worked well in other high schools. In the main, teachers construct their courses independently. A course may be initiated at the students' request or because of a teacher's special interest in it. It must, of course, receive the approval of the director and the school's superintendent.

For both curriculum construction and evaluation, there is need for the guiding hand of an on-the-spot, experienced supervisor. Students are entitled to expert evaluation of the learning experiences offered in their courses. Teachers deserve assistance in finding and organizing materials. Similarly, the many inexperienced teachers in the alternative schools would benefit from professional training. Their enthusiasm and zeal deserve to be supplemented with know-how.

It is true, however, that a supervisor in the alternative schools must tread delicately. Students and teachers alike cherish their freedom to initiate, to innovate, to reject. This is one of their reasons for being there. Authority per se is suspect. Supervision must therefore be tactful, supportive and creative. It can be, as the best practices in the regular high schools have shown.

If the alternative high schools are to fulfill their function in secondary education in New York City, supervisory services must be provided them. It is anticipated that the ACCESS office will be the channel for repairing this omission.

Community Relations

Local communities have a major role in several of the alternative high schools. In the four which were founded by community groups, a community board of governors, or advisory council, is continuously active. A fifth was planned as a community-based school and successfully encourages ongoing participation by parent and neighborhood groups. The advisory council in these schools helps formulate policy -- on curriculum and on admissions, for example -- and, as well, enlists support for the school. Local business and professional figures may assist in career guidance or may enrich instruction by lectures on their specialties. Local agencies provide learning sites or part-time

* In each subject area, the Board of Education maintains a bureau which serves as a resource in curriculum and instruction for local school districts, for individual schools, and for the subject area citywide.

employment for students. Community volunteers may participate as tutors. As has been noted, one group, which includes corporate sponsors, contributes some funds for special purposes.

For the alternative schools which have no local base, community relations have a different meaning. Their relations are with the larger citywide community. City-As-School, for instance, maintains constant liaison with the agencies which are its learning sites; in addition, it continuously reaches out for new contacts. The "Community" of the Satellite Academies includes not only the city's Human Resources Administration, but also the corporations and the hospital where its students are employed as part of their career training. Other alternative schools also engage the city at large in the search for learning sites and work-study opportunities for their students.

So far, these community relations have been excellent. However, a foreseeable problem is raised by the proliferation of single-school efforts to develop learning sites. Multiple, uncoordinated approaches to the resource agencies may conceivably backfire. This danger is compounded by the trend toward external learning in many of the regular high schools. The alternative schools may find that the maintenance of good community relations calls for some degree of coordination in the development of learning sites and jobs.

Diploma

Unlike a regular high school, the individual alternative school is not accredited to grant its own diploma. Instead, the alternative school graduate may qualify for a New York City High School Diploma, issued by the Board of Education. The alternative school certifies that the candidate has met all requirements for high school graduation.

The other road to graduation from the alternative schools is to take the qualifying examination for the New York State High School Equivalency Diploma. This is afterwards exchangeable, upon request, for a New York City High School Diploma.

Size

Smallness has been an integral element in the concept of the alternative school. Certainly, smallness fosters personalization. Students can know one another, teachers can greet every student by name. Regulations and red tape can be held to a minimum. Programs can be individual and flexible.

The question persists: Can this humanized, personalized environment be created and maintained in a larger school? Experience and experiment may supply an answer. Several of the regular high schools are attempting to create an alternative school environment for all or most of their students. The experience of the alternative schools may prove a pilot for reorganization and reorientation of the city's high schools in the direction of individualization and personalization. Some of the efforts now under way are the subject of the next part of this report.

III. Small-Unit Organization Within the High School Mainstream

Adjunct mini schools and independent alternative high schools together serve not quite 7000, or just under 2.5%, of the 300,000 young people on register in the city's public high schools. Even on the premise that these 7000 are the ones most sorely in need of a personalized learning environment, it stands to reason that there are thousands more whose need is nearly as urgent. Nor, it may be argued, should this need be recognized only in the desperate. What, then, is the road to humanization for the 97.5%?

Clearly, though the alternative schools have a recognized function, they were never meant to be the answer for the bulk of our students. That answer must be found in, and by, the regular high schools. If the large high school can build into its organization and programs the flexibility, the individualization, the intimacy and the esprit de corps which characterize the alternative schools, it can offer the student much more than the small school can. It holds out the very substantial advantages of its size: a broad range of curricular and career choices; a diversified faculty of specialists; expert supervision of curriculum and instruction; an appropriate physical plant; specialized equipment for instruction in such fields as science, the arts and occupational skills; a variety of sports and other student activities. To combine the best of both worlds is today's challenge to the high schools.

To date, among the most effective responses to this challenge has been the creation of schools-within-a-school, each clustered around a specific student interest or need, often oriented to a career goal. Some patterns for this kind of organization are described below.

A. A Complex of Mini-Schools

One school has tackled the problem by restructuring itself altogether. Haaren High

School is an all-boys', inner-city school of about 1800 students. It is housed in a large old building which lacks laboratories and several other facilities of a modern high school. For some years its student body had increasingly exhibited the alienation syndrome: a high rate of dropout and absenteeism, a great deal of "cutting," poor scholastic achievement, disciplinary problems. In 1971, a redesign was undertaken with the collaboration of the Board of Education, the Urban Coalition and a few large corporations. Students, faculty and parents participated in the planning process. What emerged was a school consisting of a complex of mini schools. Although details of the plan have naturally been modified as a result of experience, its essentials are being followed.

The school is divided into ten mini schools which range in size from under fifty to somewhat over three hundred in register. Each mini school is headed by a teacher-coordinator elected by the mini school staff, and each is under the supervision of an assistant principal (supervision). Each has its own area in the building: an office, a student lounge and classrooms clustered nearby. All share the use of a few large facilities: cafeteria, gymnasiums, shops. One or two paraprofessional school-neighborhood workers are assigned to each mini school and perform valuable functions in home liaison, guidance and discipline.

Most of the mini schools have a specific career or occupational focus. After an exploratory freshman year in "Haaren Prep," the student selects a mini school in line with his interests. His choices include the Automotive, Aviation, Electronics, Cooperative Education and College Bound mini schools. Students who have not developed a clear career goal may go into the unspecialized Senior School in the tenth year. This mini school includes preparation for the High School Equivalency Diploma. A small group is in Special Education. It is understood that if a student's academic or career interests change he may transfer to the appropriate mini school.

Within each mini school, decision-making is patterned on a "college" model. In curriculum development, for example, the staff agrees on a proposed change and the subject teacher works out the course of study. The new course is subject to the approval of the mini school's director, who may in turn call on the advice of the assistant principal who is the expert in that subject area. The extent of innovation and experi-

mentation varies from one mini school to another. Students take little part in such decision-making, but this appears to be due to their own indifference rather than to any exclusionary policy.

Certain functions are centralized as consistency and efficiency require. Overall school organization, budget and schoolwide policies are in this category. Centrally administered services include attendance and professional guidance. Counselors are supervised and assigned by the assistant principal in charge of guidance. A valued central facility is the school's Professional Service Center which maintains audio-visual and photographic equipment and trains teachers and some students in its use.

The role of the school's principal is analogous to that of superintendent of a small school system. Aside from supervising the centralized functions, he is overall supervisor, consultant, arbiter, and liaison with the community and the High School Division. His is, of course, the ultimate responsibility for the school's operation.

The Haaren experiment is still feeling its way. Although the impact of the reorganization can be gauged only through an evaluation process, it may be of interest to note some reactions expressed by faculty members. Most believe that the new order holds great promise, though they acknowledge that serious problems remain to be solved. The mini schools, they say, have created a more intimate atmosphere, in which students are known as individuals to the teachers and to the director of their small unit. As a result, there is better spirit in the school - - a quality too elusive to measure, but recognizable. They point to some improvement in attendance and to a marked decrease in "cutting." On the negative side, students do not yet seem ready for active voluntary participation in school concerns. Their apathy has not only retarded student involvement in the councils of the mini schools but has also hampered the development of student government organization.

For a number of reasons, the Haaren plan is worth watching as it evolves through experience. For one, the population of the school corresponds closely to that of the alternative schools. For another, this is the first full-scale attempt in New York City to create a personalized environment in a regular high school through the small-unit approach. It is noteworthy that the attempt is being made with the total, heterogeneous student body, not just with students who have opted for an alternative school.

If eventual evaluation shows reasonably encouraging outcomes, this may be one of the patterns for the future.

B. Schools-Within-A-School

In almost every high school can be found one or more programs which draw a group of students together into what is, in effect, a small "school" within the larger framework. The school-within-a-school most often centers around a specific career area, but may focus instead on a special interest or need of certain students. Although humanization was not the primary purpose of most of these units, it has been one of their notable outcomes. Their small size enables the student to regain a sense of identity as an individual and of identification with a community.

The subschools differ widely in size, in organization and in distinctness from the main body of the school. Brief descriptions of a few types may illustrate various patterns.

1. The Cooperative Education Program

Cooperative education, which blends classroom instruction with related work experience, has been a feature of the city's high school system for sixty years. Currently the program is operative in eighty-five high schools. "Co-op" is the archetype of a school-within-a-school. The following discussion must focus solely on the in-school aspect of the program. (The vital work experience component has been treated in an earlier report, The Community As School.)

Students in the program are juniors and seniors. The occupational areas may be, variously, office skills, retailing, health services, or any of several industrial skills. Registers vary from school to school, from as low as thirty-five up to one hundred fifty students. Although the schedule for school-work rotation differs according to the local program, a typical schedule is a one-week alternation between school and job.

In every participating school, a cooperative coordinator (a faculty member assigned by the principal) is the key to establishing the climate and tone of this school-within-a-school. The coordinator recruits and screens students for the program; prepares and refers them for job placement; monitors their attendance, adjustment and progress both in school and on the job; sees each student regularly; and is the immediate resource for the student who encounters problems either in school or at the work site. The

coordinator acts, as well, as liaison with the faculty and the administration of the school and with the Cooperative Education Bureau at the Board of Education. Time is allotted for these duties on the basis of a citywide formula. Undoubtedly, the quality of the coordinator is the single most critical factor in the effectiveness of the program as a medium of personalization.

The coordinator's office becomes "school" headquarters to the students. Ideally there should be room enough for small-group meetings, for browsing through career materials, even for some individual tutoring. The actuality often falls far short of minimum standards. The designs of the newest high schools do provide classroom-resource clusters which lend themselves to the school-within-a-school organization.

The schedules of the alternate-week students necessitate a further degree of self-containment in the small unit. To compensate for attending school only every other week, students carry a double period of English and of social studies, in addition to two periods in the occupational major. Their classes are necessarily separate from those of the main student body, except in the gymnasiums. A consequence is the growth of a closely-knit community of students.

The sense of community extends to the teachers, especially to those who are assigned to cooperative classes for most of the day. This is reinforced when the teacher is also in charge of a cooperative homeroom section. The link is weaker when a teacher has only one or two cooperative classes. The concentration or diffusion of teachers' programs in the group may be dictated by circumstance; however, it may reflect the policy of the high school or of a department in the school. It may be policy to foster the distinctness of the subschool. Another viewpoint holds that separation is to be avoided, that both students and teachers should be kept aware of their ties to the school as a whole. Perhaps more important to the sub-school's atmosphere than its structure is the readiness of the teachers to recognize the students as members of a distinctive, esteemed group within the school.

The outcomes of the program of cooperative education have been impressive. While the dropout rate for the entire high school population is approximately 30%, the "co-op" dropout rate is under 5%. Nor is this figure due to avoidance of risk in intake. Students come into the program by many routes and for different reasons. Some are

spurred by financial need, some by an urge to escape the classroom routine, others by the desire for a head start toward full time employment after graduation. Not all have exemplary school records. The program will often gamble on a student's potential. Its holding power is therefore all the more significant. The records of students in course evince marked improvement in attendance and scholarship. Regular followups of graduates show that 85% are in employment or in post-secondary education. It is, of course, impossible to pinpoint the proportionate influence on these results of the job experience, the vigilance of the central Cooperative Bureau, the personal qualities of the coordinator and the teachers, and the sub-school organization itself.

2. The College Bound Program

Initiated in 1967 under Federal funding, the College Bound Program is now in force in thirty-four high schools. Its premise is that intensive guidance and cultural enrichment combined with special concentration on reading and mathematics can help disadvantaged youngsters raise their aspirations and realize their potential for higher education. Students are admitted to the program directly upon entry into high school and remain in it, if their progress is satisfactory, until graduation. Each participating school selects approximately one hundred students annually, on the basis of record, testing and recommendations from the feeder schools or community agencies. The students are below grade, though not markedly so, in reading and mathematics. They have shown motivation for achievement.

The concept of a school-within-a-school is built into the program's organization. Here, too, the coordinator is the key figure, with duties similar to those in the cooperative course. In addition, however, a guidance counselor is assigned full time to each 150 students. Family assistants maintain contact between school and home.

Students are assigned to small supplementary College Bound classes in mathematics and reading. In other classes they commonly mingle with the rest of the student body. They are usually placed in separate homerooms, to facilitate group guidance. Thus, the program strikes a balance between a separate identity and unity with the mainstream. Membership in College Bound is generally a source of status for the students.

Group participation and cohesiveness are fostered in several ways. The coordinator and the counselors hold repeated meetings with students and with parents to discuss

career and college planning. Numerous trips are organized for motivational reinforcement and cultural enrichment -- to college campuses, to theatres, to concerts and to places of interest in and near the city. These activities are, as well, a setting for informal, personal student-faculty and student-student contacts.

Results appear to support the program's premise and its procedures. Of 2102 College Bound graduates in June 1974, 90% went on to college. Of these, 64% entered the City University, while 36% entered either private colleges or colleges of the State University. Accepted financial aid totaled $1,568,558. Credit for this achievement must be apportioned among many features of the program as well as among many persons and the cooperating host schools. One significant factor is surely the personalizing effect of the program's small-unit organization as a school-within-a-school. College Bound works with youngsters who, though not the most alienated or the poorest achievers within the high school population, are among those to whom the rescue from anonymity can make the greatest difference.

It should be noted that the College Discovery and Development Program is organized along very similar lines and with comparable objectives. Operated jointly by the Board of Education and the City University, the program is located in five high schools, one in each borough.

3. Educational Options

The Directory of Public High Schools of New York City lists an impressive variety of special career-oriented programs offered by individual high schools. Termed educational options, these are organized as schools-within-a-school. A few random examples are: Aviation, Communications Arts, Civil Service Careers, Health Professions, International Studies, Ornamental Horticulture, Oceanography, Performing Arts.

Most options are open to students citywide or from a broad area of the city, regardless of the boundaries of the parent high school's regular zone. This arrangement opens an extensive range of specialized courses to every interested student, without costly duplication of facilities and personnel.

The extent to which these sub-schools operate as separate entities varies greatly from school to school, and varies, too, with the nature of the program. Frequently, the group attends specially designated classes for most of the school day, so that

instruction in academic subjects may be related to the area of specialization. Interdisciplinary studies and team teaching are often built into these programs. In other cases, separate classes are organized for the group in its area of concentration only, and students mingle with the main student body in the rest of their subject classes. Commonly, separate homerooms are designated for the sub-school. For guidance and pupil personnel services the students are, with rare exceptions, merged with the regular student body.

A coordinator of the program is its unifying force and is, as well, a parent figure for the students. The coordinator may be an assigned teacher or, as is frequently the case, the assistant principal in charge of the program's major subject area.

The group's common goal or interest provides the first point of identification and involvement for the students. Their sense of identity is strengthened in their separate classes, where their teachers take note of the special nature of the program. In-group association among the students, and frequent individual and group contacts with the coordinator contribute further to a group esprit. Most programs also provide for extra-class activities such as career conferences, trips and community service.

These programs suffer some limitations in comparison with other schools-within-a-school, such as the mini schools or the cooperative course, which receive some supplementary allotments of personnel. Most programs set up by individual schools receive no special funding, but are maintained wholly out of the parent school's regular allotment. No school budget can provide for an optimum allocation of personnel. Consequently, allocations for coordination and for small special classes must be pitted against other needs and priorities within the school. Especially for the school which contemplates organizing a series of sub-schools, the additional cost of the small units must be weighed in the light of their value as a force for humanization and involvement.

A problem in many crowded schools is one of space. Office space for the coordinator is always at a premium and is sometimes non-existent. Classrooms cannot always be reserved for the program. Lack of a home base and resource center may dilute the effectiveness of the small-unit organization. Again, the construction of the newer high schools lends itself more readily to this purpose.

A third problem is that of the target population. Some programs are geared to a

broad spectrum of ability, others to the higher echelons. Practically all, however, look for interest and motivation on the part of the student. They are rarely havens for the purposeless drifter who is perhaps most in need of the small-unit environment. This problem is aggravated in programs which are limited to juniors and seniors, since alienated students often give up or drop out in the earlier grades.

4. Other Small-Unit Organizations

Some units are specifically organized to serve the student who might otherwise be lost in the anonymous mass. One school divides its entire freshman class into small "schools" of 300, to create a more personalized setting. Others establish sub-schools for groups such as the physically handicapped, or new entrants who require remediation in reading, or arrivals who are unfamiliar with the English language. These answer the need, but often on a temporary basis. The student who "graduates" from a remedial program, for example, is thrust into the mainstream of the school where, deprived of the personalized environment of the small unit, (s)he may flounder and regress. Ideally, a student would have the option of continuing in a given sub-school throughout high school, or of transferring into another sub-school as his/her requirements change.

There is growing recognition that the need for a humanized environment is not restricted to the disadvantaged or the non-academic student. One high school which admits students on the basis of a scholarship test divides its junior and senior classes into sub-schools centered around the students' major course of study. An attempt is made to cluster each unit's classrooms in one area, with only the large facilities -- gymnasiums, lunchrooms, some laboratories -- used in common. The school is pleased with the greater intimacy thus created, but concedes that it has yet to make comparable provisions for freshmen and sophomores.

C. Educational Options Organized on a Citywide Basis

Though not strictly classifiable as schools-within-a-school, two programs are relevant to this discussion as avenues of humanization and involvement. These are Talent Unlimited and the Executive High School Internships Programs.

Talent Unlimited, which is open citywide to high school juniors and seniors, is a "school" of performing arts in music, drama and dance. Students attend regular

classes in their respective home high schools until noon each day, then gather at one Manhattan high school from one o'clock onwards for their career option. Their training includes not only performance, but also techniques of direction, production and the like. Personalities in related professions are frequently involved. Close relations are maintained with such institutions as Lincoln Center.

Applicants are required to show talent in the chosen field, as well as a satisfactory level of school attendance and achievement. They may remain in the program until graduation, subject to maintenance of a satisfactory school record. The home school grants academic credit for courses taken at Talent Unlimited.

Talent Unlimited thus affords its students much of the freedom and individualization of the alternative schools without separating them from the educational opportunities and facilities of the regular high schools.

The Executive High School Internships Program offers a semester of experiential learning to juniors and seniors in high schools throughout the city. It is operated jointly by the Board of Education and New York City's Human Resources Administration. Students are placed as interns to executives in a variety of municipal departments and agencies. The intern both observes and participates in the substantive work of the agency. It is stipulated that the youngster's time not be devoted to routine clerical tasks.

Interns are required to keep a daily log of their activities and, as well, to attend a weekly small-group seminar. Each intern's progress is monitored by a coordinator who also conducts the seminar. The intern thus builds personal relationships with a number of adults -- the coordinator, the supervising executive and, usually, other employees in the agency. The one-to-one learning situation in the Executive Internship Program is the ultimate in personalized education for the five hundred young people who participate in it each term.

At the end of the internship, the home school grants credit for the equivalent of a term of school study as contracted for in a "Memorandum of Understanding," upon recommendation of the coordinator and upon presentation by the student of evidence of a valid learning experience. Interns who subsequently return to school are encouraged to share with fellow-students the insights gained during the internships.

Applicants to the program are carefully screened. Criteria include some degree of self-direction and self-discipline, and good interpersonal relations. The program aims to recruit a broad range of academic ability and has been making special efforts to bring in the physically handicapped. (This program was more fully treated in an earlier report, The Community As School.)

D. The High School As a Synthesis of Small Units

In a number of high schools, an increasing proportion of the student body is moving into small schools-within-a-school. One example of this trend is a high school of 2500 students, about half of whom are now attached to the following sub-schools:

Goal Orientation and Career Exploration - one year, for all new entrants

Operation Harmony - one year, for poor readers in the Ninth Year

College Discovery - selected students in grades 10, 11, 12

Cooperative Education, Business Skills - juniors and seniors

Cooperative Education, Electro-technology - juniors and seniors

Health Careers in Geriatrics - juniors and seniors

STEP - for potential dropouts

Humanities Program in English/Art/Music - a new program

Mini School for Alternative Education - all grades

Parallel set-ups in many other schools differ only in the kinds of specialties the feature.

The process of breaking down the large impersonal mass is, however, incomplete at present. The "average" student who presents no overt problem, who earns satisfactory grades, who evinces no special talent and who has developed no specific career interest or academic bent is still part of this mass. The next step, an extension of the personalized environment of the schools-within-a-school to encompass the entire student body, is now under consideration by several high schools.

A key policy of New York City's school system is the encouragement of local initiative to meet local needs. Accordingly, each high school will tailor its pattern to its own student body. Various syntheses of existing types of schools-within-a-school, together with some new forms, can be anticipated. Their common feature will be an individual identity for each student in a small group within the large institution.

Effective organization along these lines makes certain demands on the deployment of space and personnel. A high school which believes in the value of the small unit as an agency for personalization will order its priorities accordingly. The essentials have been noted earlier in this discussion and require only a brief summary at this point:

- - Sufficient time must be allowed the sub-school's coordinator for the key tasks of getting to know the students and of working with students and teachers to build a group identity and esprit.

- - Space must be allocated for a group office and, it at all possible, for a nearby students' study-lounge-resource center and a teachers' workroom. In the case of smaller sub-schools, these facilities can be shared.

- - Insofar as possible, the sub-school's classrooms should be reserved for the group and should be clustered near the group office. It is understood that facilities such as gymnasiums, shops and laboratories must be shared schoolwide.

- - Teacher identification with the group is strengthened if most of a teacher's program is scheduled to be within the group. Identification is further strengthened if the group's subject teachers are also assigned to homerooms in the sub-school. This, however, may not be practicable.

- - If the group is large enough, counselors and other pupil personnel officers should be assigned to the group rather than retained in a central unit. A number of small sub-schools may be pooled for guidance and related services.

- - Time should be scheduled for periodic sub-school meetings.

- - Secretarial services should be provided for the larger sub-schools, and access to these services should be arranged for the small groups.

Experience with schools-within-a-school has yielded some suggestions and cautions for schools which contemplate an expansion of the small-unit organization:

- - Teachers and supervisors need both preliminary and ongoing orientation to the desired atmosphere, the relationships and the processes of the personalized school-within-a-school.

- - Ideally, the homeroom teachers are the front-line counselors. If this is to be realized, teachers must be given orientation and training in guidance, and their guidance function must be coordinated with that of the professional counselors.

- - Sub-schools may adopt the techniques of family-group meetings which have been developed by the alternative schools. These meetings, replacing the formalized homeroom period, are occasions for groups guidance as well as for problem-airing and for human student-student and student-teacher contacts. Periodically, family-group meetings widen into meetings of

the entire sub-school, the larger family. It is important that sufficient time be scheduled for the family-group meetings.

- - Trips and other extra-class activities sponsored by the sub-school reinforce group esprit and person-to-person rapport.

- - Students should be given maximum input into decision-making. Students' requests are frequently a sound basis for initiating new programs. Curricular conferences may include student representation. The sub-school's "town meeting" is a forum for student involvement in the group's policies and problems.

- - Teachers should likewise be part of the decision-making process, in policy and curriculum.

- - The assistant principals, supervision, should retain their role as supervisors of instruction school-wide.

- - The school principal faces the problem of coping with the teacher or supervisor who cannot adjust to the changed environment.

- - The auxiliary services of paraprofessionals who are familiar with the students' backgrounds are practically a necessity.

- - Insofar as possible, a given sub-school should carry the student throughout high school. Students who are initially placed in a one-year sub-school should be assigned thereafter to a permanent group, with the option of changing to a specialized program.

- - The school schedule should be sufficiently flexible to allow individual sub-schools to experiment with modular schedules and with brief-cycle courses. Uniformity should not be required of the varied programs in the sub-schools. This flexibility implies assignment of a self-contained group of classrooms to each sub-school, as well as some alternative to the conventional forty-minutes bell signals.

- - Orientation of students to the small-unit concept should begin in the feeder schools. The high school can bring its message to the feeder schools as part of its program of articulation.

- - Vigilance must be exercised lest some sub-schools acquire high status and others low status among students and faculty. Inclusion of students of a wide scholastic range in each career option seems the best deterrent to the acquisition of relative status among sub-schools. Scheduling students school-wide for some subjects and activities -- in physical education, for example -- can be of some value in this effort.

- - Sub-school coordinators should meet regularly, as a group, with the school's principal. Among other purposes, these meetings can iron out potential conflicts in policies.

- - Faculty conferences should be held both at the sub-school and at the schoolwide level.

- - The parent school must make a continuous effort to build student attachment to the school as a whole, not to the sub-school alone. A council of sub-school representatives may serve as liaison with the student government. Athletics, drama and other schoolwide student activities are unifying factors. Most important is the leadership of the principal among faculty and students.

IV. Concluding Statement

A description of current developments in New York City high schools is out of date almost before it is written -- and properly so. It must be apparent from the foregoing report that the one constant in our schools is experimentation for constructive change. Some innovations are initiated by the High School Division, others by one or another of the 98 high schools. It is likely that no school, no program, is exactly the same in two consecutive years.

A high degree of local autonomy encourages wide diversity in problem-solving approaches. Sharing information about these approaches can help schools build upon sound foundations and avoid some pitfalls. It is with that purpose that this report is offered to those who are concerned with humanization and secondary education.

Notes and Acknowledgements

Information concerning all programs mentioned in this report may be obtained from the Office of ACCESS Programs, 110 Livingston Street, Brooklyn, New York 11201, Room 832. Names and addresses of all adjunct mini schools and independent alternative high schools are also available at this office.

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